



ADOPTING TEXT ON MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, SECURITY COUNCIL REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR ANNAPOLIS OUTCOMES, DECLARES NEGOTIATIONS 'IRREVERSIBLE'

6045th Meeting* (AM)

Resolution Garneres 14 Votes in Favour as Libya Abstains, Citing 'Ambiguity'

Reaffirming its support for the agreements and negotiations resulting from the 2007 Middle East summit in Annapolis, Maryland, the Security Council called on the parties, regional States, and other States and international organizations this morning to intensify their efforts to achieve a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as peaceful coexistence among all States in the region.

Adopting resolution 1850 (2008) by a vote of 14 to 0 -- with Libya abstaining -- at the end of a meeting in which four permanent members were represented by ministerial and other high-level officials, the Council declared its commitment to the irreversibility of the ongoing bilateral negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, and supported "their determined efforts to reach their goal of concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues...".

Toward that end, the Council called on both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map and to refrain from steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of the negotiations. It called on States and international organizations to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and assist the Palestinian Authority. At the same time, it urged intensified diplomatic efforts to foster "mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence between all States in the region in the context of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East".

The Council welcomed consideration by the Middle East Diplomatic Quartet -- the United Nations, United States, European Union and Russian Federation --- in consultation with the parties, of an international meeting in Moscow in 2009.

Before taking action on the text, all Council Members took the floor following the lead of the Quartet principals -- Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States; Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; David Miliband, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom; and the representative of France, which currently holds the Presidency of the European Union.

Secretary-General Ban asked the Council to act today to help "set us firmly, finally and irreversibly on the path to peace in the Middle East" by passing the resolution, acknowledging that after the Annapolis summit, it had been hoped that by now the world would be marking the conclusion of a peace agreement and turning to implementation. "We all regret this is not the case. And we know we still face many hurdles. But a serious process is under way. We must ensure that what has been started is seen all the way through to its conclusion."

Following Mr. Ban's remarks, most Council members welcomed the draft resolution, with many stressing the need to maintain the momentum of the Annapolis summit, and others noting that the Council had not acted on the Middle East for nearly five years.

Ms. Rice stressed that the text reaffirmed the Annapolis process as the way forward, as opposed to the kind of brinksmanship that had failed in the past. The text described the contours of the negotiations, defined the role of the international community, confirmed the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations, and endorsed the parties' efforts.

Mr. Lavrov said the call for full implementation of commitments under the Road Map was a particularly important part of the text, as was support for a unified Palestinian position. The summit in Moscow had been proposed with the intention to continue that momentum. Mr. Miliband noted that Council resolutions over the years had laid the groundwork for a political settlement of the situation, and it was important now to express determination to make real progress in 2009.

Libya's representative, however, said Council action had been sparse over the past 60 years, noting that when the 15-member body had pronounced itself, its words had not been translated into deeds. The text contained deliberate ambiguity and did not confront breaches of illegality, which did not serve peace as much as harm it. The aggressor could interpret such texts as acceptance of its practices, and the victim could see them as proof that the international community was biased, thereby promoting further despair and frustration.

The situation in the region since the launch of the Annapolis process had deteriorated further, he said, urging the Council to move quickly to protect civilians facing collective punishment, which constituted a crime against humanity. The minimum conditions conducive to a just solution required a condemnation of such Israeli practices and ending them.

Members also heard a brief introductory statement by Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia, in his capacity as Council President.

The Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China also spoke.

Other speakers today were the representatives of Viet Nam, South Africa, Costa Rica, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Panama, Belgium and Italy.

The meeting opened at 11:20 a.m. and ended at 12:50 p.m.

Resolution

The full text of resolution 1850 (2008) reads as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 242, 338, 1397, and 1515 and the Madrid principles,

"Reiterating its vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders,

"Welcoming the 9 November 2008 statement from the Quartet and the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding announced at the November 2007 Annapolis Conference, including in relation to implementation of the Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,

"Noting also that lasting peace can only be based on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, freedom from violence, incitement, and terror, and the two-State solution, building upon previous agreements and obligations,

"Noting the importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative,

"Encouraging the Quartet's ongoing work to support the parties in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

"1. Declares its support for the negotiations initiated at Annapolis, Maryland, on 27 November 2007 and its commitment to the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations;

"2. Supports the parties' agreed principles for the bilateral negotiating process and their determined efforts to reach their goal of concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, which confirm the seriousness of the Annapolis process;

"3. Calls on both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Performance-Based Roadmap, as stated in their Annapolis Joint Understanding, and refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations;

"4. Calls on all States and international organizations to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and to support the Palestinian government that is committed to the Quartet principles and the Arab Peace Initiative and respects the commitments of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, to assist in the development of the Palestinian economy, to maximize the resources available to the Palestinian Authority, and to contribute to the Palestinian institution-building programme in preparation for statehood;

"5. Urges an intensification of diplomatic efforts to foster in parallel with progress in the bilateral process mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence between all States in the region in the context of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

"6. Welcomes the Quartet's consideration, in consultation with the parties, of an international meeting in Moscow in 2009;

"7. Decides to remain seized of the matter."

Background

The Security Council met this morning to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question.

Opening Remarks

IVO SANADER, Prime Minister of Croatia, which holds the Security Council Presidency for December, said he hoped through today's meeting to recognize "a shared momentum we cannot afford to lose" towards a negotiated settlement of the Middle East conflict that had started with last year's summit in Annapolis, Maryland.

BAN KI-MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that, after last year's summit in Annapolis, it was to be hoped that by now the world would be marking the conclusion of a peace agreement and turning to implementation. "We all regret this is not the case. And we know we still face many hurdles. But a serious process is under way. We must ensure that what has been started is seen all the way through to its conclusion."

In the new year, the situation on the West Bank and in Gaza must be stabilized, and all tracks of the process must be intensified, he said. All stakeholders must maintain unity and redouble their efforts -- Israelis and Palestinians, regional countries and the Quartet, including the incoming United States Administration and the Security Council.

Reaffirming his deep commitment to the goal of a just and lasting peace based on previous Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, he expressed the hope that the Council would act today to help "set us firmly, finally and irreversibly on the path to peace in the Middle East".

Statements

CONDOLLEEZZA RICE, Secretary of State of the United States, said the situation in the Middle East was very different now from the time when President George W. Bush had entered office in 2001. At that time, the Camp David process had collapsed leaving Israelis and Palestinians in a vicious cycle of violence. No image better captured those desperate times than the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Each time a ray of hope had penetrated the darkness, it had been snuffed out by intolerance.

Reforms in the Palestinian Authority in 2003 had inspired hope, yet they had proved to be superficial, and the hope deceptive, she recalled. The Palestinian elections in January 2005 and the Israeli disengagement from Gaza later that year had provided hope that had soon been ended by the election victory of Hamas in 2006 and the war in Lebanon later that year. Finally, after Hamas had usurped power in Gaza in 2007, it had become clear to all that there was no alternative to the Bush vision of a State of Palestine and a State of Israel, living side by side in peace and security.

President Bush, building on that new dynamic, had convened the Annapolis Conference, the first major peace conference in 16 years and the only one of its kind on United States soil, she said. Since then, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had bravely demonstrated their commitment to peace through continuous bilateral and substantive negotiations. They had made the choice to defeat an ideology of hatred with one of hope. The support of the United States and the international community had not been sustained by false hope or an ignorance of the challenges, but by a genuine belief in progress and in the prospects for success if the parties continued down that path.

Emphasizing that the United States had a national interest in the conclusion of a final treaty, she said the establishment of a State of Palestine was long overdue, and called for an end to the occupation that had begun in 1967. That was a bilateral process and the two parties would have to conclude a bilateral agreement, but it was incumbent upon the international community to support them. For that reason, everyone was gathered in the Council today to consider a draft resolution sponsored by the United States and the Russian Federation and to chart the way forward.

The text described the contours of the negotiations and defined the role of the international community, she said, adding that it confirmed the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations and endorsed the parties' efforts. The Annapolis process had advanced under the leadership of both sides and must be built upon; it was not a matter of lip service, but of genuine commitment to turning the two-State solution into reality. The Arab Peace Initiative was a historic proposal, and just as Israel should reach out to the Arab States, so should they reach out to Israel. There could be no turning back the clock; the process must go forward along the chosen path.

SERGEY LAVROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said today marked an important stage in the process started at Annapolis. The fact that the parties were considering the important issues made it a crucial process and the momentum must continue, establishing the irreversibility of the political process. In that context, the call for full implementation of commitments under the Road Map was a particularly important part of the new draft resolution, as was support for a unified position on the part of the Palestinians. Those who would participate in future negotiations would be expected to continue seriously and with the intention of moving forward. The summit in Moscow had been proposed with the intention to continue the momentum and resolve.

DAVID MILIBAND, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, said the Council did not lack a consistent policy on the Middle East; in fact, its resolutions had become the bywords of hopes for a political settlement of the situation. It was important now to express determination to make real progress in 2009. Negotiations had been ongoing but cynicism had grown at the same time. In that context, the Annapolis process may not have delivered a Palestinian State, but its absence would have left the situation much worse off.

Stressing that Israelis and Palestinians must lead the process towards actually reaching a solution, he said it was crucial that they have the support of the region in a "23-State solution" -- 22 Arab States and Israel, living together in mutual recognition and peace. Those who would make the process fail must not be allowed to succeed, particularly in light of threats by Hamas. The United Kingdom was determined to support the Palestinian Authority in building its institutions, unity and security capabilities. In any case, progress must be made, he concluded. "The perils of inertia are clear."

HE YAFEI, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, noted that, since Annapolis, the international community had made tireless efforts to promote the peace process, but regrettably, the negotiations had failed to achieve major breakthroughs within the set timetable. At present, the Middle East situation was blessed with opportunities for further improvements, but it also faced uncertainties and risks. It was incumbent upon the international community to ensure that it achieved substantive progress. Today's meeting would play a positive role in taking up that common challenge.

He said he would support adoption of the draft resolution, which called for support for the Palestinians and Israelis in advancing their political negotiations. Those talks represented the sole, viable and correct path towards enduring peace in the Middle East. Under the new circumstances, both parties were expected to work on the basis of the relevant resolutions and the land-for-peace principle, and, through the talks, attain a two-State solution at an early date. As the Secretary-General had said recently, 2009 should be a year of harvest for the Middle East peace process. China had similar expectations, but it realized that the road ahead would be tortuous. The most urgent task was to ensure that both parties implemented their respective obligations in earnest and refrained from taking any actions that would prejudice the outcome.

The construction of settlements in the West Bank and the imposition of the blockade in Gaza were not conducive to the creation of an enabling environment for negotiations, he continued. The humanitarian crisis facing the West Bank and Gaza was troubling, and the international community should continue to assist and

support the Palestinians in their capacity-building and in speeding up their economic development. A lasting peace in the Middle East would, by necessity, be a comprehensive one, of which the realization of peace between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel would be integral parts. The Quartet played an important role in promoting a comprehensive settlement to the Middle East question, but it should exert greater efforts and strengthen its regular communication with the Security Council. China was ready to work with the international community to continue to play a constructive role.

GIADALLA A. ETTALHI ([Libya](#)) called for a reversal of the Council's behaviour of recent years on the Palestinian question, which had represented a continuous threat to peace and security for more than six decades. The problem was accompanied by the tremendous suffering of the Palestinian and other peoples of the region, continuous violations of human rights, and unprecedented breaches of international humanitarian law. It had also been characterized by conflicts and cycles of violence. Yet, the Council had refrained for years from taking explicit and decisive action. In cases where it had passed resolutions, they had remained mere words rather than deeds, owing to the lack of genuine political will among some Council members to reach a just solution which respected international legality and rejected occupation and repression.

Libya would reject today's draft resolution in principle, he said, stressing that generalization and deliberate ambiguity, as well as a failure to confront breaches of illegality, did not serve peace as much as harm it. The aggressor and occupier must not interpret such texts as acceptance of its behaviour and policies, nor should the victim see them as proof that the international community was serious, but biased, acting with double standards, thereby promoting further despair and frustration.

The situation in the region since the launch of the Annapolis process had deteriorated further, he said. The practices of the Israeli occupation had escalated; killings and detentions had continued; settlement activity had intensified; the siege on the Gaza Strip had worsened; and the number of checkpoints in Gaza and the West Bank had increased. All that made daily life unbearable; the demolition of houses had continued, as had construction of the separation wall, most of it on Palestinian territory.

Violence had extended to Arabs within and outside the Green Line, he said, noting that behind aggression by the settlers was a formal acceptance by Israel. There were explicit breaches of the Road Map and of the pledges made at Annapolis, as well as of international law. The Council must move quickly to protect civilians facing collective punishment, which constituted a crime against humanity. Was it not clear that providing the minimum conditions conducive to a just solution required a condemnation of such Israeli practices and ending them, as they could not represent a way towards peace? Disregarding them was an invitation to continue them.

JEAN-MAURICE RIPERT ([France](#)) recalled that, throughout the past four and a half years of silence during which there had been a lack of resolutions on the Middle East, his country had urged that the Council make the situation a priority. The European Union, of which France currently held the Presidency, would work hard to drive the peace process forward in the year ahead. It would also support talks between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon. The European Union hoped to work with President Elect Barack Obama on a unified approach.

Speaking in his national capacity, he expressed support for the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine, living in peace with Israel. France called for inter-Palestinian reconciliation for that purpose and for a comprehensive approach to peace negotiations. In that light, the Arab Peace Initiative must be translated into action, perhaps in a phased approach in which confidence-building measures would be essential. There was also a need for rapid and real change on the ground.

Commitments made under the Road Map must be fulfilled and Israel must reciprocate the progress made by the Palestinian Authority, he said, stressing that it was necessary and urgent for that State to end settlement activities. In addition, the International community must mobilize to support the Palestinian Authority. France pledged its continuing support. Absolute respect for international humanitarian law was crucial, including an end to terrorism, the firing of rockets at civilian populations, and collective punishment directed at the population of Gaza and other areas.

HOANG CHI TRUNG (Viet Nam) said the Middle East peace process was at a critical juncture, with renewed opportunities and challenges. The current "surge in diplomacy", amply demonstrated by the continued commitments of both Israel and Palestine to the Annapolis negotiations on final status issues, was heartening. Favourable developments included home-grown efforts by the Palestinian Authority towards statehood and proactive mediation efforts by the Quartet, the League of Arab States and regional countries. Indirect talks between Syria and Israel, and promising steps in the Lebanon-Israeli dialogue were also of note. Those positive developments could eventually crystallize into an enabling environment of mutual trust and peaceful coexistence, from which all nations could share in the peace dividends.

Yet, that progress might have diminutive effects unless it was further consolidated through efforts by Israel and Palestine to satisfactorily and peacefully address issues of common interest, he warned. All parties concerned must demonstrate the political will to keep the peace process on track and to avoid the crushing letdowns of the past. At such a defining moment, all parties must exercise the utmost restraint and refrain from any step or statement that might undermine the peace process and prejudice final-status negotiations. More concerted efforts should also be made to achieve more tangible improvements on the ground, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the land-for-peace principle, the Madrid Conference, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map and the Annapolis outcome. Viet Nam supported the two-State vision and welcomed yesterday's meeting of the Quartet and the Arab League, hoping that the coming meeting of the Quartet in Moscow would provide even greater impetus to move the peace process forward on all tracks.

DUMISANI S. KUMALO (South Africa) expressed concern over the lack of improvement in the situation in the Middle East, particularly Palestine, since the Quartet Declaration five years ago. Indeed, the illegal occupation of Palestine had intensified and Palestinians continued to face hardships that were compounded by the financial embargo, the expansion of Israeli settlements, the building of an illegal separation wall, and more than 600 roadblocks. The draft resolution before the Council was not perfect, since it ignored many significant issues that the Council must address, including: illegal settlement activity in the Palestinian territories; attacks on Palestinian homes in Hebron by Israeli settlers; and ongoing violence against Palestinian and Israeli civilians. However, South Africa would support the resolution because it recommitted the parties to their previous obligations.

After adoption, the resolution would face two crucial tests, he said. The first was whether the parties would implement its provisions, and the second was whether the Council would ensure implementation of its resolution. If the resolution was ignored, that would further erode the Council's credibility. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, noted for its importance in the draft, spelled out clear and specific affirmations expected of both Israel and the Arab countries, and should be considered a serious contribution to bringing about peace in the Middle East. The Palestinian people had been without a home for 60 years, except for the ghettos and camps they occupied around the world. In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians continued to live under a complete blockade, with only the bare essentials to keep them alive. Although South Africa would soon leave its Council seat, it reiterated its invitation to the Special Envoy of the Quartet, Tony Blair, to brief the Council in the new year on his efforts in the occupied areas.

JORGE URBINA (Costa Rica) said any initiative to promote Middle East peace was welcome, but the proliferation of efforts in that direction did not absolve the Security Council of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. While the work of the Quartet was valuable, the majority of United Nations members had received little information about it. Along with other delegations, Costa Rica

had repeatedly asked the Quartet to inform the Security Council of its actions with the aim of complementing those efforts instead of the more marginal role the Council had played in recent years. Costa Rica would support the draft resolution despite his preference for the inclusion of a reference to the dramatic humanitarian situation in Gaza caused by Israel's disproportionate response to the terrorist attacks perpetrated against its territory.

There was a close relationship between the political perspectives for peace and the social and humanitarian situation on the ground, and the Council should not ignore it, he said. The accumulation of Israeli actions contravened the Council's resolutions and the Road Map, hindering progress, as did calls for the elimination of the State of Israel. It was absolutely unacceptable that the Organization's Member States ignored the statehood of other Member States and their right to exist. Also worrying had been the restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank and the increasing number of illegal settlements since Annapolis. Unless that trend was reversed, the efforts of the two sides would not succeed. For those reasons, Costa Rica would have preferred a draft resolution identifying the core issues of the conflict. It would also have hoped that the Council would have pronounced itself on the obligations of the parties.

MICHEL KAFANDO (Burkina Faso) said the Middle East situation was one of the most complex on the Council's agenda and a paradox because, despite the unanimous view that a lasting solution must be found, the parties and the international community found it difficult to evolve an acceptable political solution. It had to be acknowledged, once again, that the goals remained elusive -- but not because of a lack of action; there had been the Paris Conference and the initiatives of Egypt and Yemen. Still, there were real obstacles on the road to peace. Israeli settlements continued on occupied Palestinian land, as did the embargo on Gaza, and the firing of rockets into Israel.

He said that was why his delegation supported the Council's initiative to send a message of encouragement and support to the parties by calling on them to "keep alive and well the spirit of the Annapolis process". To achieve that, the parties should continue their frank dialogue and make bold concessions in order to settle pending issues, strengthen Palestinian unity and provide assistance for Palestinian refugees, among other things. The Council itself had an important role to play, and it must play it.

First, the Council must ensure that its resolutions were implemented. The vision of a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel was not utopian or a negation of Israeli security. Rather, it would ensure a just and lasting Middle East peace, and the parties should work towards that goal. Hope had been born in Annapolis during a crucial stage on the road towards a settlement of the conflict, and hope was still alive "because we and the parties are aware that it is one of the best opportunities to date to resolve the dispute". Burkina Faso supported the draft resolution to that end.

MARTY M. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia) said there was no international issue more important to his country than efforts to find a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indonesia had consistently supported efforts to achieve such a settlement, and had lauded the two parties' commitment to the Annapolis peace process. It was unfortunate that the Security Council's record on the issue had been less than sterling, as the Council had been unable to pronounce itself collectively and with a single voice. "The Council's silence on the situation in the Middle East, including Palestine, has been deafening," though today's meeting was a welcome change.

The meeting was providing encouragement to the parties to redouble their efforts to engage in vigorous, continuous negotiations, and to make every effort to achieve a meaningful and result-oriented outcome, he said. The draft resolution before the Council made clear the need to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of those negotiations, and it was thus imperative to maintain the cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. It was also essential that Israel lift the closure

of the Gaza crossings immediately. The civilian population in the Gaza Strip was enduring unacceptable levels of humanitarian hardship and their plight must be addressed urgently. Also, Israel must immediately end its illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The challenge now was to ensure that there would be no gap between peace efforts and the situation on the ground, he said, noting that improvements in the situation on the ground would reinforce the momentum of negotiations. To that end, Indonesia attached great importance to international efforts to develop and strengthen Palestine's national institutions, as recognized in the draft before the Council. Indonesia underscored its position that a comprehensive peace in the Middle East would require not only a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also progress on the Israel-Lebanon and Israel-Syria tracks, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions. The outcome of today's meeting could help consolidate the peace process and provide a platform for further progress. Not least, it would send a signal that the Council was once again shouldering its Charter-mandated responsibilities.

RICARDO ALBERTO ARIAS ([Panama](#)) said that, at first glance the text under consideration was lacking in substance, but on closer examination it contained many elements needed for progress. They all reflected the Council's work on the situation and must be done to end the occupation and establish a Palestinian State. As the text served to provide impetus for the peace process, Panama would vote in its favour.

JAN GRAULS ([Belgium](#)) said the draft resolution was important as it reconfirmed the Council's support for the peace process until the desired objective was reached. For the first time in eight years, there was enough momentum to possibly reach a settlement of the situation. The negotiations were significant as they continued despite the efforts of extremists to derail them.

He called for international support for the talks, as well as for the negotiation process, in light of the unusually strong support demonstrated in the past year, including by his own country. Belgium welcomed recent confidence-building measures and stressed that progress on the ground was now crucial, including an end to settlement activity and punishment for settler violence. The situation in Gaza remained a catastrophe, and the firing of rockets into Israel threatened to restart the spiral of violence.

ALDO MANTOVANI ([Italy](#)), noting that the negotiations were entering a delicate phase, said he supported the parties' resolve, as demonstrated at the Sharm el-Sheik meeting. It was absolutely essential that they reach a comprehensive agreement in the form of a peace treaty. There were still considerable gaps on core positions, however, but now more than ever, Palestinians and Israelis needed clear and specific solutions and not vague suggestions. The ongoing political process must become irreversible.

It was also fundamental to contribute to the strengthening of Palestinian institutions by promoting economic development, as well as institutional and security sector reform. The two-State solution could only be ensured through a Palestinian State with sound institutions that functioned in the setting of the rule of law and good governance. Equally important was the promotion of a constructive approach by all States in the region. Italy encouraged the support provided by the Arab League, both economically and politically. In that context, the Arab Peace Initiative had great potential.

Meanwhile, he said he was concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. There was an urgent need to restore and maintain calm and to reopen the border crossings. The accelerating construction of Israeli settlements and violence were also causes for further concern. Italy welcomed Israeli efforts to prevent further violence and to liquidate settlements, the expansion of which, particularly in East Jerusalem, did not facilitate dialogue. Rather, it undermined the credibility of Palestinian negotiators in the eyes of public opinion.

Action on Text

The Council then adopted the draft resolution by 14 in favour to none against, with 1 abstention (Libya), as resolution 1850 (2008).

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